

審査の結果の要旨

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The current study aimed to answer the following research question: Does breastfeeding intention measured prenatally using the Infant Feeding Intention (IFI) scale have an association with exclusive breastfeeding practice among women in North Central Nigeria?

The main objectives of the study were to, first, assess breastfeeding intentions prenatally among pregnant women and determine its association with exclusive breastfeeding; second, identify factors associated with sub-optimal breastfeeding practices during early infancy among breastfeeding mothers in suburban places of residence; and third, to determine maternal characteristics influencing breastfeeding intentions.

The main findings were as follows:

1. Prenatally, 149 (71.0%) of the 210 study participants expressed strong intentions to exclusively breastfeed their infants until six months infant age. The mean survival time for exclusive breastfeeding duration in the low, moderate and strong IFI score categories were 8.6 (SE 1.26), 10.0 (SE 0.65), and 11.3 (SE 0.21) weeks respectively at three months postpartum. Exclusive breastfeeding rate was 79.4% at three months postpartum. Pre-lacteal feeding was practiced among 48 (23.0%) participants.
2. The risk of exclusive breastfeeding cessation was significantly lower in women with stronger breastfeeding intentions for the Hazards Ratio estimated in the Cox model: (HR=0.87, 95% CI 0.8-0.95). Mothers who administered pre-lacteal feeds to their infants in the early hours after birth had a higher risk (HR 2.93 95% CI 1.49-5.77) for discontinuing exclusive breastfeeding as compared with mothers who did not practice

pre-lacteal feeding. Meanwhile, delivery of an infant by caesarean section was not a risk factor for cessation of exclusive breastfeeding (HR 0.17 95% CI 0.04 - 0.67).

3. Further analyses conducted using ordinal logistic regression for the factors predicting IFI score pattern showed that higher maternal age, maternal religion being Islam and having an unplanned pregnancy increased the odds for having lower IFI scores and low breastfeeding intention. Notably, being aged ≥ 35 years old was significantly associated with an increase in the odds of obtaining a low IFI score (OR=0.21, 95% CI 0.05-0.85). Similarly, Muslim mothers had a significantly increased odds of obtaining IFI scores lower than their non-Muslim counterparts (OR=0.23, 95% CI 0.06-0.86). Women with intended pregnancies were 2.12 (95% CI 0.99-4.54) times more likely to obtain a higher IFI score; however, this association was not found to be statistically significant.

As at the time of this research, the current study was the first known prospective cohort study to assess the impact of breastfeeding intention on exclusive breastfeeding among Nigerian population. Also, no study could be identified that described factors associated with breastfeeding intentions among Nigerian population. Overall, prenatal breastfeeding intention was significantly associated with exclusive breastfeeding in this study. Breastfeeding intention was further explained by maternal characteristics. Therefore, this study concludes that effective promotion of exclusive breastfeeding during prenatal period must target correlates of feeding intention. In view of the importance of the contribution from these findings towards improving infant feeding practices in Nigeria, it is considered worthy of publication and award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.